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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000775

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRT SALAH AD DIN: PC JOCKEYING ATTEMPTS TO
MARGINALIZE IIP AND DEP GOV ABDULLAH

REF: A. BAGHDAD 560

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 454

Classified By: Salah Ad Din PRT Leader Rick Bell for reasons 1.4 (a) and (d).

(U) This is a PRT Salah Ad Din reporting cable.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Sources told the PRT that many members of the new Salah ad Din (SaD) Provincial Council (PC) met on March 15 to form a coalition called "Fortress Salah ad Din." The coalition aims to prevent current Deputy Governor Abdullah Hussein Jebara or any Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP)/Tawafuq member from getting a top job in the new PC. This is a politically charged move since they belong to the two largest constituency groups in the province: the Juboori tribe (of which Abdullah is a leading member) and the district of Samarra (where many IIP members are from), respectively. The coalition will seek to ensure support from the two groups by giving each one of the two top positions in the new SaD government. Sources say the coalition discussed possible candidates for the Governor and PC Chair positions, and will seek to avoid regionalism by giving positions to the three districts not represented on the new PC. The coalition will finalize its plans after the election results are certified. The PRT has also heard of a competing attempt at coalition-building involving IIP/Tawafuq. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Three separate sources told the PRT that 14-16 members of the new 28-seat PC met on March 15 and agreed to form a coalition called "Fortress Salah ad Din." Reports concur that the group agreed to support the host of the meeting, Ahmed Abdullah Abid (aka Abu Mazin), of the Iraqi National List (INL), for PC Chairman. Reports vary as to the solidity of the choice for Governor: Khalid Hassan Mahdi of the Iraqi Scholars & Intellectuals List is mentioned most prominently, but one PC member who attended the meeting, Nayazi Mohammed Mahdi of the Iraqi Turkmen Front list, told the PRT March 17 that there was a second candidate in the running for Governor, Dhamin Allewi of the Liberation and Construction Front. Nayazi explained the rationale for choosing Abu Mazin and Khalid: Khalid is a Samarran, and the Samarrans expected one of their own to hold a top job since they won 11 seats, by far the most of any district. Abu Mazin was the highest vote-getter and the leader of one of the two lists (Tawafuq and INL) that tied as the top winners with five seats each. He has the added benefit of being a member of the Juboori tribe--the largest in SaD. Nayazi provided no rationale for Dhamin to be Governor.

[1](#)3. (C) Two other sources gave similar reports. Mayor Shouket of Yethrib told the PRT officer in Balad that none of the five PC members of the IIP/Tawafuq were present at the March 15 meeting. This was confirmed by Ra'id Khutab (strictly protect throughout), a political strategist for the SaD National List who said the new coalition intends to marginalize IIP members (who are all from Samarra) for fear of their religious extremism.

[1](#)4. (C) Ra'id said the coalition also wants to prevent

Abdullah Hussein Jebara, the current Deputy Governor, from getting a top job. While the coalition may eventually allow Abdullah or IIP to join, Ra'id said it will try to prevent this until it has a solid agreement in place with a strong majority. Ra'id's account of the reasons for the two top picks was consistent with Nayazi's: picking Abu Mazin and Khalid Hassan Mahdi will appease the Juboori tribe and the Samarrans by giving each one of the top two positions.

¶5. (C) Nayazi said he will support selecting candidates for advisors to the governor from the three districts not represented on the new PC: Dawr, Dujayl and Sharqat. He believes this will help avoid regionalism in the provincial government. The coalition plans to meet again after the election results are certified. At that next meeting, the Fortress Salah Ad Din members plan to sign a legally binding document spelling out points of agreement.

¶6. (C) The Kurdistan Patriotic Union (PUK)-affiliated secretary of the Tuz District Council, Mr. Sardar, told the PRT of a competing coalition involving IIP/Tawafuq that would give the governor's post to a Tawafuq member, one deputy governor slot to Dr. Ameen Aziz Jawad, a Kurd from Tuz, and the other to a PC member from Saleh al-Mutlak's list (the Iraqi National Project Assembly). Interestingly, Sardar noted also that the IIP coalition would give the PC chair job to Abu Mazin, as Fortress Salah Ad Din plans to do.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) The incoming PC, although fewer in number than the

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old (28 PC members vs. 44), is more balanced geographically and seems to have more members with strong, outgoing personalities. The outgoing PC was largely a passive group, easily dominated by a few strong leaders. The change was one of the intended effects of the open-list system; the previous closed-list system provided party leaders with total control and an incentive to fill slots with loyal allies who could be relied upon to follow directions. Despite preliminary reports that the new coalition is in agreement, it will be tough to marginalize Abdullah Jebara. With abundant resources, and family members and close associates positioned throughout the provincial government in the most powerful and sensitive positions, he is well-equipped for Iraqi-style hardball political infighting. The situation remains fluid; we will not know for sure the outcome of all this jockeying (and neither will they) until the new PC formally elects the top officials. END COMMENT.
BUTENIS